



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services**

3001 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-3001
Tel 919-733-7011 • Fax 919-733-1221

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Michael Moseley, Director

February 7, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Area Directors
FROM: Mike Moseley
SUBJECT: Utilization Review Tool for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

The proposed CAP-MR/DD waiver recently submitted to CMS for approval provides for Utilization Review (UR) to include a standardized, statewide criteria and process established by the Division of MH/DD/SAS. The draft UR tool is currently posted on the Division's website for review and comment. We are hearing that there is some considerable confusion regarding the tool. The goal of this communication is to clarify its purpose and implementation date. It is important to note that use of the tool **does not** go into effect until the implementation of the new CAP/MRDD waiver, scheduled for July 1, 2005.

The intent of the UR process is to ensure that services authorized in the Plan of Care meet the needs of individuals based on the person centered planning process. The UR tool is not intended to be either a "floor" or a "ceiling" in regard to the amount of services that an individual may receive. Rather, the tool serves as a guide to indicate when additional information may be required to clarify the amount of paid services and supports included in the Plan. These UR criteria will apply to all counties, with the exception of those counties that are a part of the Piedmont Local Management Entity.

The tool was originally designed using comparative data that indicated that individuals that fell within a specific NC-SNAP index score typically received a particular range of supports. (Note: the NC-SNAP index score is derived from multiplying the raw score on the NC-SNAP by the domain score.) During the months of November and December 2004, four separate stakeholder groups were convened specifically to walk through the use of the tool and apply it to actual consumer "test cases" to provide feedback. The four groups represented consumers and family members, staff of LMEs, staff of provider agencies, and representatives of advocacy organizations. Each of these groups identified issues that needed to be addressed in the tool and the feedback resulted in additional modifications. As noted above, the Division continues to solicit public comment through our website and it is expected that additional revisions may be identified as a result.

As the date for implementation draws closer the Division will provide training on the use of the UR tool. Since there appears to be some initial confusion, however, it may be helpful to understand how we plan for the UR tool to be applied at the local level. The first step in the process of identifying the services and supports an individual consumer needs must always be through the development of the person centered plan. The person centered planning process involves the consumer, their family and other significant individuals in their life and is facilitated by the case manager providing Targeted Case Management services. The case manager will submit the completed person centered plan to the service authorization unit of the LME for approval and authorization of paid services and supports. The service authorization unit of the LME will review the plan, using the UR tool as a guide. When an individual plan indicates a need for services that is significantly under or over the amount predicted by the UR tool, the authorization unit will contact the case manager. The conversation between the authorization and the case manager will seek to clarify any unique circumstances in the



consumer's life which resulted in the services requested being above or below the expected level. Final service authorization will be based on the accumulation of additional information gathered regarding such unique circumstances.

The CAP/MRDD waiver is designed to provide a wide range of services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. It is the goal of the Division to ensure that each consumer receives the services and supports necessary to meet their needs, while at the same time ensuring that the funds available are used to serve the maximum number of consumers possible. The application of standardized UR criteria is one way to meet those goals. It is the intent of the Division to continue to revise the UR tool over time as new data is accumulated and new assessment tools are identified.

cc: Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom
Lanier Cansler
Division of MHDDSAS Executive Leadership Team
Chair, Commission for MHDDSAS
Chair, State CFAC
Chair, Coalition 2001
State Facility Directors
Carol Duncan Clayton
Patrice Roesler
Dick Oliver
Kaye Holder
CAP/MRDD Waiver Team

